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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

The influence of certain trees in preventing the propagation of mosquitoes.

[The following is a preliminary note; the completed work will at some future time form the subject of a special bulletin of the yellow fever institute.]

SOUTH ATLANTIC QUARANTINE,
via Inverness, Ga., October 19, 1901.

SIR: I have to respectfully submit the following preliminary report concerning some experiments I have been making in connection with the breeding of mosquitoes in proximity to certain kinds of trees.

I hung cans filled with fresh water in thickets of oak trees, pine trees, china ball trees, and palmettos. The water in all cans was from the same source and was drawn at the same time; the cans were about the same size and were hung in about the same manner, as I tried to make the conditions as nearly the same as possible in everything except the kind of trees the can was hung in. My observations were as follows: In the oak and palmetto the mosquitoes bred readily; in the pine there were some wigglers in the can at the expiration of about three weeks, but they were not nearly so abundant as they were in the cans which were in the oak and palmetto. In the can hung in the china ball bushes there were no wigglers at any time, although I watched it carefully for five weeks. I have been obliged to discontinue my experiments for this season, as the leaves have almost all fallen off the china ball trees, but I hope to be able to make them more exhaustive next season.

I would also like to try some other varieties of trees, i. e., eucalyptus, camphor, and castor bean, and have to respectfully request that I be allowed to purchase a few trees of each variety to plant at this station for the purpose of continuing these experiments.

While I have not yet been able to carry on this work for a sufficient time, and extensively enough to make the results positive, I believe that the china ball tree does, to a great extent, if not entirely, prevent the breeding of mosquitoes in their immediate vicinity. To what distance from the tree this applies I have not yet observed, as I did not begin the work until rather late in the season. It seems to me, however, that the matter is worthy of further investigation and I hope that other officers who may have opportunities for making observations on these lines will do so, as, should the fact that the china ball tree prevents the breeding of mosquitoes be proved, it would aid much in the prevention of diseases which are transmitted by that insect.

Respectfully,

G. M. CORPUT,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.